

Application No. 10/601,843

REMARKS

Claims 1-18, 23-27, 30-33, 38, 39 and 47-51 are pending and claims 19-21, 28-29, 34-37 and 40-46 and 52 have been withdrawn. By this Amendment, claims 1, 7-9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 26, 38, 47 and 50 are amended, and claim 49 is cancelled. No new matter is added by these amendments.

Allowed Subject Matter & Election/Restrictions

As an initial note, Applicant acknowledges the allowance of claims 11, 30-33, and 39 and thanks the Examiner for the same. Further, since independent claims 11, 30, 33 and 39 are allowable generic claims, Applicant requests that the Examiner declare that each of the dependent claims depending therefrom, including withdrawn species claims 34-37 and 40-45, are likewise allowable.

Claim Objection

The word "disassemblable" in claim 11 has been amended to "disassemblable" in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion.

Claims Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 12-18 and 23-27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Namely, the Examiner directs the Applicant to the "connector pin" limitation of claim 12 as being indefinite as "it appears that there are two different connector pins that extend into the first and second member flanges." Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection as the current claim language only requires that "end portions" of the connector pin extend into the respective first and second member flanges, not two different

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connector pins. Applicant suggests a telephone conference if the Examiner believes it would advance clarification and/or resolution of this issue.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 12-14, 24-27, 38-47-51 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,536,097 to Hazan. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. However, independent claims 12, 38 and 47 have been amended to more particularly define and point out the claimed invention. Hazan fails to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention as amended. For example, Hazan fails to disclose, teach or suggest the flanges of the amended claims.

With respect to independent claim 12, Hazan does not disclose, teach or suggest flanges secured within the tubular frame members, wherein the flanges have radially traversing securing apertures in communication with respective end portion apertures of the frame members and the axially traversing connection apertures of the flanges, or flanges having a plurality of indexing pin apertures positioned around the axially traversing connection apertures of the flanges in a generally circular formation.

Referring to independent claim 38, Hazan fails to disclose, teach or suggest flanges having radial connector apertures in generally transverse communication with axial connector apertures of the flanges, or flanges having a plurality of indexing pin apertures positioned around the axial connector apertures of the flanges in a generally circular formation.

Similarly, with respect to independent claim 47, Hazan fails to disclose, teach or suggest flanges having radial apertures extending into the flanges for generally transverse communication with the axial apertures of the flanges, or flanges having a plurality of indexing

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pin apertures positioned around the axial apertures of the flanges to define a generally circular formation.

Discussion by the Examiner for the claims depending from claims 12, 38 and 47 are not addressed further as they are presently moot given the claim amendments to and the analysis for the respective independent claims. In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 12-14, 24-27, 38-47-51 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b).

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hazan. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. However, independent claim 1 has been amended to more particularly define and point out the claimed invention. Hazan fails to disclose, teach or suggest the claimed invention as amended. For example, Hazan fails to disclose, teach or suggest the flange of amended claim 1.

Hazan does not disclose, teach or suggest flanges disposed within metallic tubular segments, wherein the flanges have radially extending apertures, or flanges having a plurality of indexing pin recesses positioned around central pin recesses of the flanges to form a generally circular indexing pin recess formation.

Discussion by the Examiner of dependent claim 2 is not addressed further as it is presently moot given the claim amendments to independent claim 1, from which it depends. In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of 1-2 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

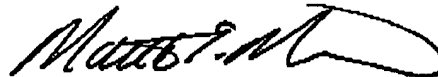
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CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned if the Examiner believes it would be useful to advance prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,



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